

BIBLE STUDY SERIES

THE TRINITY

ONE GOD OR THREE?



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The Trinity — One God or Three?

Shortly before Jesus was crucified, Israel's supreme court, the Sanhedrin, arrested and tried Him. The Bible says, **"The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward."**¹ Even though false witnesses accused Jesus of several crimes, He did not defend himself. **"The high priest [Caiaphas, wishing a quick, guilty verdict] stood up and said to Jesus, 'Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?'** But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, **'I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.'**

"'Yes, you have said so,' Jesus replied. 'But I say to all of you: In the future, you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.' Then [in outrage,] **the high priest tore his clothes [which God forbade the high priest to do,²] and said, 'He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more**

1 Matthew 26:59-60

2 Leviticus 21:10

witnesses [to condemn Him]? **Look, now you have heard the blasphemy.’”¹**

On many occasions, Caiaphas had heard Jesus claim to be the Son of God. Therefore, he reasoned that if he could get Jesus to declare himself the Son of God, the Sanhedrin would hear the *blasphemy* and reach a unanimous verdict. When Jesus confirmed that He was the Messiah, the Son of God, He violated the most sacred doctrine within Judaism: a philosophy called *monotheism*.

The Jewish version of monotheism teaches that there is one God. His name is Jehovah, and all other gods are false and imaginary. The Jews considered any challenge to this doctrine blasphemy, punishable by death. Jesus understood the trap before responding to Caiaphas. If He denied His identity, He would be a liar. If He spoke the truth, He would be killed for blasphemy.

Monotheism and Judaism

The Old Testament described the basis for Jewish monotheism. Consider the following passages. While tending sheep, Moses saw a burning bush, and as he approached, “**‘Do not come any closer,’ God said. ‘Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.’ Then He said, ‘I am the God of your father [Amram], the God of Abraham,**

¹ Matthew 26:62–65, insertions mine

the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.’ At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.”¹ Notice the singular voice of “I am the God.”

Later, from Mount Sinai, God spoke the first commandment: **“I am the Lord [Jehovah] your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before *me*.”²**

The “me” in the text is a singular pronoun. Shortly before Moses died, he made the declaration: **“Hear, O Israel: The Lord [Jehovah] our God, the Lord is *one*.”³ The “one” in this text is also singular. Finally, notice what God said about himself: **“This is what the Lord [Jehovah] says—Israel’s King and Redeemer, the Lord [Jehovah] Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from *me* there is no God.”⁴ The “me” in this text is also singular.****

These verses and many others in the Old Testament explain why Jewish monotheism teaches there is *one* God and His name is Jehovah (eternal God). We need to understand Jewish monotheism because Jesus came to Earth to confront this doctrine, and the Sanhedrin sentenced Him to death for it.

Because monotheism is the foundation of Judaism, the Jews in Christ’s day believed Jehovah couldn’t

1 Exodus 3:5–6, insertion and italics mine

2 Exodus 20:2–3, insertion and italics mine

3 Deuteronomy 6:4, insertion and italics mine

4 Isaiah 44:6, insertions and italics mine

have a son. Orthodox Jews still anticipate the Messiah will come, but they insist He must be an ordinary mortal because monotheism mandates that it is impossible for more than one God to exist.

Judaism's View of Jesus

The high priest became livid when Jesus said He was God's Son. The problem was this: If Jehovah had a son, there would be two Gods! If there were two Gods, monotheism was a false doctrine, and Judaism was a false religion. One Sabbath day, Jesus came upon a crippled man lying beside a pool of water in Jerusalem, and Jesus healed him. Later, when the man learned that Jesus had healed him, he told the priests. **"So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute Him [as a law breaker]. Jesus said to them, 'My Father is always at his work to this very [Sabbath] day, and I too am working [within the boundaries of the Sabbath commandment—which the Jews had badly distorted].' For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath [they thought], but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God."**¹

The Jews understood that a son was an equal of his father. A cow produces a cow because the parent's seed is identical to the seed of the offspring, and the

¹ John 5:16–18, insertions mine

father's seed is identical to the seed of his son. *Like begets like*. Therefore, when Jesus said that God was His Father, the Jews became furious because His use of language declared that He was equal to Jehovah.

Jesus Spoke the Words of the Father

When Jesus said that God was His Father, it was actually the Father who spoke through Jesus' lips. Jesus did not speak on His own. The Father wanted the Jews to know that Jesus was His equal, so the Father spoke words through Jesus' lips that conveyed this idea to them. The Jews were outraged and insulted by the Father's words, but Jesus was not the one speaking! Jesus said: **"For I did not speak of my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken."**¹ On another occasion, Jesus said: **"These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me."**² Jesus said to His disciples, **"Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work."**³ While praying for His disciples, Jesus said to the Father, **"For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me."**⁴

1 John 12:49

2 John 14:24

3 John 14:10

4 John 17:8

This is a profound point to consider: The Father confronted the Jews through Jesus, and He received their abuse. The Jews were insulted and highly offended because their religious beliefs did not align with the truth Jesus revealed about God. This is how it will be during the Great Tribulation. Jesus will speak through the lips of the 144,000! His words will be insulting and inflammatory. Satan's agents will torture God's servants as if the 144,000 spoke on their own! We should not be surprised because our sinful nature is hostile toward God.¹ For a moment, put on the Sanhedrin's sandals. How could a homeless, homely-looking thirty-three-year-old man from Nazareth be so insulting? How could He brazenly claim to be the Son of God? How could He be an equal of Jehovah?

The Father confirmed Jesus' identity on several occasions: At His baptism, the Father spoke from heaven. He said, "**This is my Son.**"² On the Mount of Transfiguration, the Father again spoke from heaven. He said, "**This is my Son**"³, and then, just before His crucifixion, Jesus was in the temple. He called upon His Father to speak from heaven so that everyone present could know that He was the Son of God—and the Father did!⁴ When Jesus died, the Father sent an angel to tear the temple curtain from top to bottom. This wool

1 Romans 8:7

2 Matthew 3:17

3 Matthew 17:5; 2 Peter 1:16–17

4 John 12:28–30

curtain, about four inches thick, separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. The angel exposed the Most Holy Place, indicating that the temple services were abolished. The Jews killed the *Lamb of God*, and His death terminated the Levitical system.¹

When the Father said through Jesus, *the Father and I are one*, He did not want the Jews to understand that He and Jesus were the same person. Instead, the Father wanted the Jews to know that He and Jesus were like twins. The Father wanted the Jews to learn this because they worshiped and embraced a *Jehovah*, which was nothing like the *Father*. **“Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love me, for I [am exactly like the Father, and I] have come here from God. I have not come on my own [I am not saying what I want to say or doing what I want to do]; God sent me.’”**² **“Whoever belongs to [the true] God hears what God [the Father] says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God [you belong to your god, the devil].”**³

The Jews could either admit that monotheism was a false doctrine or kill a lowly-looking homeless man for blasphemy. If the Jews admitted that Israel’s most sacred doctrine was false, it would shatter their religion which dates back to Abraham. Have you had

1 Mark 15:38; Colossians 2

2 John 8:42, insertions mine

3 John 8:47, insertions mine

a cherished view of God crumble? Have you lost friends, family, church, and job because of new light? If so, you understand the bittersweet joy of truth and the pain of rejection.

Monotheism – A Sufficient Doctrine

For more than one thousand years, Jews believed monotheism was an absolute truth, but the Bible teaches that monotheism is what I call a sufficient doctrine. Sufficient doctrines exist because God allows people to embrace incomplete and faulty ideas.¹ When God reveals greater truth, sufficient doctrines become weak and insufficient because He has given more light. Sufficient doctrines always have loose ends and are not scripturally complete. People who accept a sufficient doctrine overlook and diminish parts of Scripture that, within the context of the sufficient doctrine, make no sense.

For example, what would you do with this passage if you were a devout believer in monotheism? “[The Father said to the Son,] **Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God [the Father calls Jesus, “God”], your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with**

¹ 1 Corinthians 13:9–12

the oil of joy.”¹ The Jews often read Psalm 45, but, within their concept of monotheism, they could not figure out how one God, the Father, could speak to another God, the Son, and elevate Him above His companions!² Therefore, the Jews ignored and diminished Psalm 45 because it did not fit their preconceptions.

The Father sent Jesus to Earth so the Father could speak through a faithful witness. A few people believed the Father spoke through Jesus, and He supported this belief when He prayed to the Father, **“I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world.”**³ **“For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.”**⁴ Jesus’ ministry reveals a very interesting process: Man’s understanding of truth is always incomplete. We cannot know more than God has revealed. When God wants more truth known, He sends *new light*, and it often produces conflict. Jesus said, **“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But who-**

1 Psalm 45:6–7, insertions mine

2 Hebrews 1:8–9

3 John 17:6

4 John 17:8

ever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.”¹ We cannot know when or through whom *new light* has come, but we know the Father will continue to reveal new light for eternity because He constantly reveals more truth. The irony with new light is that seekers of truth are delighted while defenders of tradition are insulted because their darkness is threatened.

Paul observed this phenomenon, but only after He became a Christian: **“Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets.”²**

When the Father releases new light in religious matters, there are always two results. The first is insult and rejection. The Jews rejected Jesus because He presented a doctrine of two Gods (new light), incompatible with their doctrine of one God (tradition). Secondly, people who embrace new light will suffer for it, and the price may be death (like Jesus and the

¹ John 3:19–21

² Ephesians 3:2–5

first Christian martyr, Stephen). However, the truth will move forward because the Holy Spirit will help seekers of truth to understand and embrace it!¹

Jesus is the Son of God

The Father sent Jesus to Earth (He did not come on His own – John 10:18), to reveal more truth, but the mission did not go well. **“Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires [which is to murder me for blasphemy].’”**² **“Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”**³

Of course, the Father knew that Israel’s leaders would have a very difficult time letting go of monotheism, so He often confirmed Jesus was the *Son of God* through astonishing signs and miracles. The first miracle was the virgin birth of Jesus. No other virgin had given birth to a child. The Father sent the angel Gabriel to Mary, saying: **“You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.”**⁴

1 John 16:13

2 John 8:42–44, insertion mine

3 John 8:47

4 Luke 1:31

“‘How will this be,’ Mary asked the angel, ‘since I am a virgin?’

“The angel answered, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.’”¹ You may not realize it, but the angel made a profound revelation when He called Jesus “the Holy One.”

The Jews considered the title *Holy One* very important, and the Old Testament used this title about fifty times to describe Jehovah. Notice Isaiah’s words: **“With whom, then, will you compare God? To what image will you liken him?”**² **“Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff. ‘To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?’ says the Holy One. ‘Lift up your eyes and look to**

¹ Luke 1:34–35

² Isaiah 40:18

the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.”¹ “Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and His understanding no one can fathom.”²

After reading Isaiah 40 and many similar passages in the Old Testament, we can see why the Jews regarded monotheism as absolute truth. It was a sufficient truth in God’s sight until God gave new light. However, Gabriel gave Mary *new light* that the *Holy One* (almighty God) would be born to a virgin. John describes the miracle: **“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory [on the Mount of Transfiguration], the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace [compassion] and truth [no lies].”³**

Jesus is called “the Word” because the Father’s testimony came through Him. When the Father wanted to speak, He spoke through Jesus. Many people do not realize that the Father rarely spoke in the Bible. When He did, He spoke through Jesus, to Jesus, or to exalt Jesus.

1 Isaiah 40:21–26

2 Isaiah 40:28

3 John 1:14, insertions mine

Through Jesus: Jesus told the Jews that it was the Father speaking through Him: **“For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken.”**¹ **“Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.”**²

To Jesus: The Father said to Jesus: **“Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.”**³ The Father called Jesus “God,” and He identified Himself as “God” in Psalm 45. This should have revealed to Israel that monotheism was not an absolute doctrine. Tradition has a way of hiding facts that we do not understand.

Exalted Jesus: **“While he [Peter] was speaking [on the Mount of Transfiguration], a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from the cloud, saying, ‘This is my Son [my equal], whom I have chosen [the Messiah]; listen to him.’”**⁴

1 John 12:49

2 John 14:24

3 Psalm 45:6–7

4 Luke 9:34–35, insertions mine

The Father also exalted Jesus when He was baptized: **“As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment, heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son [my equal], whom I love; with him I am well pleased.’”**¹ When the Father announced from heaven that Jesus was His Son, He exalted Jesus as His equal! The Jews perfectly understood the equality of a father and son, and this claim made them furious.²

Jesus Speaks for God the Father

The Father is invisible. No created being has seen him, and no created being will ever see Him! Even the angels can only see an outline of His brilliance. At the Second Coming³ and for all eternity, the redeemed will only see an outline of His brilliance. No created being can see the Father because He lives in “unapproachable light.” His infinite glory and power would blind anyone exposed to the Father. This explains why only Jesus and the Holy Spirit can see the Father and enter into His glory. Each of them is God, as the Father is God. When the Trinity formed, Jesus was appointed *the Word*, and He will be the Father’s spokesperson forever. Study these verses:

1 Matthew 3:16–17, insertion mine

2 John 5:18; 10:33

3 Matthew 26:64

1. Jesus said: **“No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father.”**¹
2. Paul wrote: **“The Son [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God.” “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being.”**²
3. Paul wrote: **“God [the Father], the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.”**³
4. John wrote: **“No one has ever seen God [the Father] but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made Him known.”**⁴

Previously, I wrote that Jesus is like the Father’s twin. This is important because the Father sent a physical representation of himself to Earth. We see the Father’s character when we consider Jesus’ life of self-denial, sacrifice, humility, and kindness.

Remember, Jesus washed the dirty feet of His disciples and allowed wicked men to ridicule, spit on, and beat

1 John 6:46

2 Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3, insertion mine

3 1 Timothy 6:15–16, insertion mine

4 John 1:18, insertion mine

Him before He went to the cross. Then, on the cross, He said, **“Father, forgive them,”** before He died. Jesus perfectly reflected the Father through His life on Earth. We can know the Father would have done the same because Jesus and the Father are identical in character. **“Jesus answered: ‘Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’”**¹

John wrote the book of Revelation about AD 95 when he was in exile on Patmos. Later, he wrote three epistles and the gospel of John. This gospel is much more than a recollection of personal experiences with Jesus; it also contains *new truths* which Jesus revealed to John when he wrote the book. Therefore, John’s gospel differs considerably from the other three. At the beginning of the second century AD, Christianity was in trouble. The spiritual condition of the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3 reveals how quickly a church can apostatize. Therefore, to help the believers, Jesus gave John information that would have resolved many conflicts if church leaders had considered and implemented guidelines from the gospel of John.

The gospel of John is a theological cornerstone and is only surpassed by the book of Revelation in re-

¹ John 14:9

vealing all that Jesus is. John, with divine influence, wrote his gospel for those who received the *early rain* in the same way he wrote the *Revelation of Jesus* for those who will receive the *latter rain*. It is so ironic that while God gave this gospel to settle conflicts between early Christians, the very first sentence ignited a conflict that continues to endure today! **“In the beginning was the Word [Jesus], and the Word was with God [the Father], and the Word was God [just like the Father].”**¹

Jesus wants His followers to know He is God, just like the Father. The first sentence in the gospel of John declares that two separate, distinct, coeternal Gods existed before creation. Many early Christians, primarily Jewish converts, strongly opposed the idea that Jesus was deity because Jewish tradition rejected polytheism. Other early Christians, mostly Gentile converts, readily embraced the idea that Jesus was deity, just like the Father, because polytheism was not a strange concept for them. After centuries of a lively dispute over the deity of Jesus, church leaders in Rome terminated the conflict during the sixth century. Their solution was a disaster. The Catholic Church claimed one God who manifests Himself as three persons. Thus, monotheism was preserved, and the appearance of polytheism was recognized. Today, the Catholic Church

1 John 1:1, insertions mine

and many Protestant churches maintain this futile compromise.

The Catholic solution of one God manifesting himself as three persons is not viable because it places the Bible into a state of internal conflict. Internal conflict occurs when one Bible verse violates the meaning of another. For example, in Revelation 5, the Father searched the universe for someone worthy of receiving the book with seven seals. Eventually, according to the Catholic solution, the Father found another version of himself to be the only person in the universe worthy to open the book. This conclusion is nonsense. The Father is not Jesus, and Jesus is not the Father. The Catholic solution also makes the Bible unintelligible. For example, if only one God is manifesting himself as three persons, consider who spoke from heaven at Jesus' baptism saying, **"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."**¹ Does the Father mean He is happy with himself? Additionally, if only one God manifests himself as three persons, we must consider who prayed to whom before going to the cross. Jesus said, **"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."**² If one God is manifesting himself as three persons, why would He pray to himself, saying **"not**

1 Matthew 3:17

2 Luke 22:42

my will, but yours be done”? A single God does not have two distinct wills.

Jesus is the Creator of Everything

John 1 reveals another fact about Jesus. Strange as it may seem, many Christians still do not believe that Jesus created all that exists! They think the Father created the universe, but John wrote, **“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”**¹ **“He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.”**² Jesus created the universe, the angels, and humanity—everything in heaven and on Earth. Jesus creates whatever the Father wants. **“For in him [Jesus] all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him [Jesus] and for him [the Father].”**³ It is essential to know that Jesus is the Creator and was with the Father before Jesus created anything. This indicates there is more than one God!

Given what we know from John 1, consider what Isaiah says. **“This is what the Lord [Jesus] says—Israel’s King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there**

1 John 1:14

2 John 1:10

3 Colossians 1:16, insertions mine

is no God.”¹ “This is what the Lord [Jesus] says—your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord, the Maker of all things, who stretches out the heavens, who spreads out the earth by myself.”² Is it the Father or Jesus speaking in this verse? Before you answer, zoom forward about 750 years to AD 95. John was exiled to the island of Patmos, and one Sabbath day, He received a vision. “On the Lord’s Day [Sabbath] I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet.”³ “I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me.”⁴ “When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: ‘Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades [the grave].’”⁵

John saw someone who was dead but is alive forever and ever, who was the first and the last, and who held the keys of death and Hades. Only Jesus could be this person. Isaiah referred to “**Israel’s King and Redeemer,**” who stretched out the heavens and spread out the earth by himself, and who is the first and the last, and apart from him, there is no God. Only Jesus fulfills these three elements! However, this raises

1 Isaiah 44:6

2 Isaiah 44:24, insertion mine

3 Revelation 1:10

4 Revelation 1:12

5 Revelation 1:17–18, insertion mine

questions. How can Jesus say that apart from Him, there is no God if the Father is also a God? How can Jesus say that He is the first and the last if He was with the Father in the beginning?

My understanding is that when Jesus spoke to Isaiah, Isaiah interpreted His words within the context of monotheism. Israel did not know that two Gods existed, although the Old Testament offers several clues. The time had not yet come for Israel to know about two Gods. Therefore, the only God who revealed himself in the Old Testament was Jesus. Notice what this means: Jesus created Adam and Eve. Jesus sent the flood in Noah's day. Jesus was the almighty God who spoke with Abraham and Moses. Jesus passed over Egypt, killing the firstborn. Jesus delivered Israel out of Egypt. Jesus spoke the Ten Commandments from Mt. Sinai. Over 97% of the time, the Jehovah mentioned in the Old Testament is Jesus. Now that we understand there are many references to Jesus in the Old Testament, perhaps the infinite sorrow found in this statement will make sense: **“He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.”**¹

People apostatize when they refuse *new light*. When a religious body becomes set in its ways, whatever truth it may have will become stagnant. In a religious body, when truth becomes tradition, tradition

¹ John 1:11

becomes absolute truth. Of course, the Father understands the process, which is why He is constantly releasing new light to freshen and expand the body of truth.¹ When people reject *new light*, they cannot prevent themselves from falling into darkness (apostasy) because the light of truth never stops moving forward. Therefore, if we insist on standing firm on our traditions and refuse to move forward with *new light*, we will soon be in darkness.

Tradition versus Truth

Imagine you were a priest in Israel at the time of Christ. Naturally, you would be deeply committed to the doctrine of monotheism. Moreover, you would have memorized Isaiah 54:5: **“For your Maker is your husband—the Lord Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; He is called the God of all the earth.”** Given your religious knowledge, what would you have thought if Jesus physically stood before you, claiming to be Jehovah, the God of all the earth? You would not believe that a homeless man could be Israel’s Maker and Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, and the God of all the world unless the Father revealed it.

The disciples struggled to understand who Jesus was. Jesus tested His disciples one day: **“‘But what about you?’ He asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’**

¹ Ephesians 3:1–6

Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.’¹ John the Baptist had a moment of doubt during the final days of his life.² However, after the disciples saw Jesus die on the cross and ascend to heaven, their faith in Him became unshakeable.

John wrote: **“The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.”**³ Jesus is Jehovah, an eternal God just like the Father. **“No one has ever seen God [the Father] but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made Him known.”**⁴ So, Jesus came to Earth with *new light* from heaven during the 70th week of Daniel 9. The Father wanted to terminate fourteen centuries of Jewish monotheism, and few people in Israel eventually saw the light.” **“In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.”**⁵

Jesus’ role in the Plan of Salvation raises many questions. For example, why did the Plan of Salvation require Jesus to die? If the Father loves sinners enough

1 Matthew 16:15–17

2 Matthew 11:3

3 1 John 1:2

4 John 1:18, insertion mine

5 John 1:4

to sacrifice Jesus, why did the Father not give himself to die for sinners? What prevented the Father from selecting an angel to die for sinners? What in God's law requires a sinless person to die so a sinful person can go free? Why did the Father wait 4,000 years before sending Jesus to Earth? What happens to people who have died without hearing about the ministry of Jesus? Did Jesus die the first or second death? Did Jesus die in our place?

Guilt is Transferred to Heaven's Temple

The Bible does not teach that Jesus died in our place; instead, Jesus died for sinners through a process I call *The Transfer Doctrine*. God does not forgive sin; however, He is willing to separate sinners from their guilt by transferring their guilt into heaven's temple through Jesus' sinless blood. This transfer is possible if the sinner will, in good faith, confess and forsake sin, provide restitution, and humbly obey the inner voice of the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 8:5 says the earthly temple, starting with the tabernacle Moses built, and its services were a shadow of the actual temple in Heaven. This means the ceremonial law in the Old Testament and its temple services were a model that generations could carefully study and understand how Jesus accomplished the plan of salvation in heaven's temple. During Old

Testament times, if a person sinned and wanted to be free of guilt, the first step was to show sorrow for his sin by making restitution to the person he offended. Then the sinner brought a flawless lamb to the temple. When the sinner arrived at the Altar of Burnt Offering, he confessed his sin to God with his hands resting on the lamb's head. The sinner then killed the lamb, and a priest caught some of its blood in a cup. The priest applied this blood to the altar's four horns, separating the sinner from his guilt. The sinner's guilt was transferred to the temple through the lamb's sinless blood, and simultaneously, the righteousness of the sinless lamb was transferred to the sinner.

The beautiful point is that when the sinner left the temple, it was as though he had never sinned in God's sight! So, God is willing to separate the sinner from his guilt by transferring it to the temple and justify a sinner by transferring the righteousness of the lamb to him. In this context, the word *justify* means, from God's perspective, it is as though the sinner never sinned. Remember that earthly temple services were a model, a shadow of events in heaven's temple. The Bible says that animal blood cannot transfer guilt.¹

The *Transfer Doctrine* is remarkable because it also makes salvation possible for people who have never heard of Jesus. After Adam and Eve sinned, the Fa-

¹ Hebrews 10:4

ther planned to send Jesus to Earth about 4,000 years later. He foreknew that billions would live on Earth who would not have a chance to hear about Jesus. So, with generosity and love, the Father purposely designed the plan of salvation to include all human beings. Here is the process: From the time Adam and Eve sinned, salvation has been based on faith, not knowledge. This occurs whenever a person hears and obeys the Holy Spirit's promptings. This is why God gives the gift of the Holy Spirit to every person,¹ and our response to His voice determines our eternal destiny.² God will save anyone who faithfully obeys the Holy Spirit (as did the harlot Rahab³). Through faith, the Father can legitimately transfer a sinner's guilt to heaven's temple through the blood of Jesus and simultaneously bestow the righteousness of the Lamb of God on him.

The Scapegoat is the Guilt Bearer

The *Transfer Doctrine* resolves an intriguing problem. If the penalty for sin is death and Jesus did not die in our place, who pays the penalty for the sins of the saints? First, all who refuse to obey the voice of the Holy Spirit will die for their sins. Their guilt will rest on their heads. Jesus said, **“I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you**

1 Romans 12:3

2 Matthew 12:31–32

3 Hebrews 11:31

according to your deeds.”¹ Unfortunately, this text will pertain to a vast number of people!² On the other hand, each person who faithfully obeys Holy Spirit guidance will have his guilt transferred to the temple through the blood of Jesus. His guilt remains there until the temple is cleansed and transferred to the head of the guilt-bearer.

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the earthly temple was cleansed of guilt. After the high priest was found worthy to officiate for Israel, two flawless goats were brought into the temple courtyard, and the priest cast lots to see which goat would die. The remaining goat became the guilt-bearing goat (scape-goat), and the guilt in the temple was transferred to its head. Instead of two lambs, two goats were used on the Day of Atonement to show that sin began in heaven. Goats are independent, whereas sheep are followers. One article describes the difference between sheep and goats this way: “Shepherds protect sheep from their environment, whereas goatherds protect the environment from their goats.”³ The two goats represented Michael and Lucifer. (Jesus lived in the form of Michael, the archangel, before coming to Earth to live as a man. Although Jesus is a member of the Godhead, He took our form and lived among created beings as one of us.)

1 Revelation 2:23

2 Revelation 20:8–9

3 <https://wake-up.org/uncategorized/sheep-and-goats.html>

Before sin began, Michael and Lucifer were *covering cherubs*, the highest possible positions in Heaven. Both were sinless until Lucifer became jealous of Michael because Lucifer wanted to be worshiped as Michael was worshiped. When the Father told Lucifer that was impossible because Michael was a member of deity, Lucifer became angry and rebellious. The Father was patient and attempted to keep Lucifer from sinning without violating his free will. Eventually, the Father cast the devil and his followers out of heaven when they rebelled. The casting of lots to see which goat would become the guilt-bearer indicates the Father's omniscience. The Father foreknew the mind, heart, and ways of Lucifer long before Lucifer was created. Yet, the Father gave him life and made him the highest and most capable of all created beings. The Father and Michael loved Lucifer dearly, but Lucifer became vain and hostile when fellow angels did not worship him. Lucifer's disaffection led him to seek sympathetic followers, and one-third of the angels followed Lucifer.

After the lot was cast in the temple services, the priest killed the sinless (anointed) goat. He sprinkled its blood on the Ark of the Covenant, the horns on the Altar of Incense, and the horns on the Altar of Burnt Offering. After this, the priest placed his hands on the head of the scapegoat and announced that the temple was clean. All the guilt stored in the temple during the year was transferred to the guilt-bearing goat. A

strong man, then, took the scapegoat far into the desert so that the goat might die a protracted death.

Notice, the scapegoat wasn't killed. In this service, the scapegoat does not pay the penalty for sin; instead, it bears the consequences for sin. This part of the model reveals that there is no substitutionary death in the plan of salvation. Lucifer will suffer for a time (hell) before he dies because his guilt is upon his head. He must die a protracted death because he will receive the guilt the saints transferred to the temple. The cleansing of the earthly temple model illustrates how judgment day occurs in Heaven. After breaking the third seal on the Book of Life in 1844, Jesus began reviewing the records of each dead person. Jesus presents the life choices of each person to watching angels. He reveals everything, including that person's response to the Holy Spirit. When Jesus completes His presentation as God, He pronounces a verdict: The sinner's guilt is assigned to his own head or transferred to Lucifer's head. Either way, that sinner's guilt is no longer in the temple. When Jesus completes the judgment process, the heavenly temple will be clean and free of guilt.

Jesus—The Perfect Sacrifice

The Father selected Jesus to die for sinners because Jesus, as a member of the Godhead, had elements

within himself that could be transferred to sinners. When Adam and Eve sinned, they lost face-to-face communion with God, their beautiful garden home, access to the Tree of Life, and the infinite joy and excitement of eternal life. They also lost two elements that only a divine being could give a sinner—their ability to live forever and their propensity for righteousness.

All created beings borrow life from God. We live from one moment to the next because God gives us the breath of life. Sinless beings are drawn to righteousness because the power from God never ceases to flow. Therefore, the Father needed a member of the Godhead to bestow these powers on sinners. If the Father could provide such a donor, He could legitimately transfer both divine powers to sinners, and intelligent angels would unanimously agree that the Father had exceeded the demands of justice. This is achieved by transferring the guilt of sin to the head of the father of sin and transferring Christ's propensity for righteousness to every repentant sinner. Despite how evil they might have been, the redeemed sinners will easily *fit in* with the eternal happiness and joy that fills heaven.

When the Father informed Jesus that He needed a *divine donor*, Jesus volunteered. On the day that Adam and Eve sinned, Jesus became “**The Son**

[the subject] **of God.**”¹ When Jesus came to Earth, He came as the Lamb of God,² and through Jesus’ infinite sacrifice, the Father can restore Adam and Eve and their offspring to Eden without breaking or changing His laws of love! The Father is a God of love. He and Jesus have proved they love their neighbors as themselves. No greater demonstration of love is possible! No price for the salvation of sinners could be higher!

Jesus and the Trinity

At this point in our study on the Trinity, we need to synthesize what the Bible teaches about Jesus. For example, the Bible teaches that Jesus and the Father are separate, distinct, coeternal members of the Godhead. Jesus is not a created being. Like the Father, Jesus is a God **“who is from everlasting to everlasting.”**³ Jesus and the Father have independent wills.⁴ The Father spoke through Jesus to ensure the Jews understood that Jesus and the Father are equal in standing, ability, and accomplishment even though they assume different roles.⁵ The Father not only gave Jesus the words to speak but also told Jesus how and when to say them.⁶ The Father declared to the Jews

1 Psalm 2:7–12

2 John 1:29

3 Nehemiah 9:5

4 John 6:38; Luke 22:42

5 John 5:18; Matthew 26:63–66

6 John 12:49; 14:24

that Jesus was a God just like himself, but the Jews rejected the Father's testimony and crucified Jesus for blasphemy.¹

In Revelation 19:13, Jesus' **"name is the Word of God"** because the Father speaks through Him to the universe. According to Jesus, no one has ever seen the Father, for He lives in glorious, unapproachable light.² Therefore, when the Father communicates, He usually speaks through Jesus.³ The Bible teaches that Jesus created everything, including the universe, for the Father.⁴

When God's name is used in the Old Testament, the Bible is referring to Jesus! In fact, 97% of the Old Testament references concerning God pertain to Jesus. Jesus created Adam and Eve and drove them out of the garden, sent the flood in Noah's day, spoke to Moses from the burning bush, passed over Egypt and killed the firstborn, delivered Israel from slavery, spoke the Ten Commandments from Mt. Sinai, and spoke to the Old Testament prophets. If we understand Jesus, John 1:11 makes total sense, **"He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive Him."**

Jesus could not and did not die in our place. Yes, you read that statement correctly. Instead, Jesus died so

1 Matthew 26:65–66

2 John 1:18; 6:46; 1 Timothy 6:15–16

3 John 17:8

4 Hebrews 1:2; Genesis 1:1; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16

the Father could transfer our guilt to heaven's temple through Jesus' blood. This is necessary because a substitutionary death cannot produce salvation. When a person sins, he is not only condemned to death for his sin but transformed into a slave to sin.¹ Since a substitutionary death does not affect one's slavery to sin, a substitutionary death is inadequate for salvation. We need Jesus' propensity for righteousness to replace our natural propensity for sin.²

The Father Asked Jesus to Give the Ultimate Gift

As we understand who Jesus is, the required process and ransom He paid to save sinners are mind-boggling. No one will ever be able to question the legitimacy of the Father's plan to save sinners. When we study the plan of salvation, we must approach the topic with presuppositions. These include the following: The Father is righteous and faithful; He lives and acts within boundaries set by laws of love; everything He does is to benefit His children; the Father has infinite wisdom, so He is deliberate and purposeful in everything He does. As we investigate the plan of salvation, we will not be disappointed because the facts prove that the Father chose the best course to save sinners. The Father could not use a magic wand to erase sin and save sinners. The Earthly temple service teaches that God does not forgive sin. Each sin

1 John 8:34

2 Romans 1:16

is a recorded fact. Therefore, the Father designed a plan to legitimately save sinners whereby a sinner may be separated from his guilt. However, to transfer guilt, a member of deity had to die. The Father determined that the best option to transform *slaves of sin* into loving and righteous people was to transfer Jesus' righteousness to willing sinners. Of course, this transfer could only be possible if Jesus came to Earth, maintained his righteousness in human form by overcoming every temptation, gave up His propensity for righteousness, and ceased to exist.

While on Earth, Jesus said the Father gave Him authority to forgive sins.¹ Jesus did not imply that He could forgive sins with a simple command. If this were possible, it would not have been necessary for Jesus to die. When Jesus agreed to come to Earth to save sinners, the Father made him the judge of mankind.² Jesus will save anyone who obeys the voice of the Holy Spirit because He has transferred their guilt to the temple. The *Transfer Doctrine* and Jesus' words are not in conflict. This doctrine explains how Jesus separates guilt from the sinner and forgives them.

The Father has given each sinner the power of choice, but He has offered salvation with one condition. Sinners must choose to obey the Holy Spirit's voice if

¹ Luke 5:24

² John 5:22–23

they want to be saved. The Holy Spirit constantly confronts us because we have intelligence, reason, and the power of choice. We have the freedom to choose if we want to live by faith. As Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego demonstrated, living by faith is to obey the Holy Spirit's voice, do what the Spirit says, and leave the consequences with God.¹ The Father requires faith as a condition of salvation for everyone who wants to live with the Trinity through the eternal ages.²

I am sure Jesus was shocked when He heard the details of the Father's plan to save Adam and Eve and their offspring. Jesus would have to pay the ultimate price to save sinners. The Father offered Jesus a reward if He was willing to go forward with the plan. The Father promised Jesus that if He successfully carried out the plan, the Father would restore everything He had given up. Additionally, the Father promised Jesus that He would ultimately be exalted forever. This is why many versions begin the last book in the Bible with the "**Revelation of Jesus Christ.**"³ As a bonus, the Father would give all the redeemed to Jesus as personal property.⁴ The faith one God put into another God's promises illustrates the faith required to be part of God's family.

1 Daniel 3:18

2 Matthew 12:31–32

3 Revelation 1:1

4 John 17:6

The Title *Son of God*

Instead of killing Adam and Eve on the day they sinned, which the law demanded, the Father legitimately stayed their execution because Jesus submitted to the Father's plan of salvation. On that day, Jesus became man's intercessor (high priest).¹ The Father and Jesus entered into a covenant, and this promise is recorded in Psalm 2.

"I will proclaim the Lord's [Father's] decree: He said to me [Jesus], 'You are my son; today I have become your father. Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery. Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord [Jesus] with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling. Kiss his Son [obey Him, submit to His authority], or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.'"²

The Hebrew word for son is *ben*, which means *a subject, a slave, or one under authority*. Since Adam and Eve sinned, Jesus has been called *ben*, the son, the slave of the Father. We see this submission in John

1 Hebrews 5

2 Psalm 2:7–12, insertions mine

8:42, **“I have not come on my own; God sent me.”** John 6:38 says, **“For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.”** Jesus told the Jews it was not His idea to appear on Earth. Instead, the Father sent Him. The Father required Him to come as a subject under authority to save sinners.

Two wills and two separate persons are involved: One God, *the Sender*, and the other, *the Sent*. Now that you know these things, look at this verse through informed eyes: **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”**¹

Even though Jesus is an eternal God, this verse calls Him the Father’s *only begotten Son* for several reasons.

1. Genesis 22 is about a parent slaying an only child as a burnt offering to God. Even though Abraham was willing to kill Isaac and Isaac was willing to die, both were spared. This example parallels the Father’s incredible anguish in giving us Jesus. The Father loves Jesus more than any parent can love an only child; had it been possible, the Father himself would have come to die for us. Even though wicked men intended to kill deity while He hung on the cross, the Father took Jesus’ life.

¹ John 3:16, KJV

2. The love between members of the Trinity is the greatest force known in the universe. The Father could not give more or pay a higher price than to give us the life of Jesus. Jesus had to die the death that sinners would, so everything belonging to Jesus could be transferred to those obeying the voice of the Holy Spirit. The Father will not impose greater suffering on any sinner than what Jesus suffered by experiencing sin's penalty, sudden death. This does not seem possible if viewed from a purely physical perspective, but it makes sense considering that Jesus created everything and everyone. From the perspective of restitution, the Father will impose suffering on sinners in hell in proportion to the suffering they inflicted on others. If sinners, like the thief on the cross, are unable to make restitution for the suffering they caused, Jesus has paid the price.

3. Finally, how does a changeless God legitimately satisfy the law that says, "The soul who sins is the soul that will die?" The answer is found on the cross. The Father made an innocent Jesus to be sin for us and suffer the second death¹ so that He could legitimately transfer everything that belonged to Jesus to repentant sinners.²

1 2 Corinthians 5:21

2 Romans 5:17–19

Jesus is Eternal God

“In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee.”¹ “The angel said to her [Mary]:”² “You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God [the Father] will give Him the throne of his father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end.”

“‘How will this be,’ Mary asked the angel, ‘since I am a virgin?’

“The angel answered, ‘The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One [of Israel] to be born will be called the Son of God.’”³

Jesus is called the *Holy One* in the Old Testament about fifty times. Gabriel gave a statement to Mary that confirmed the baby forming within her was the God of the Old Testament. Jesus became an obedient slave of the Father because of Jesus’ infinite love for His Father and sinners. Jesus humbled himself to live in poverty. He came as a homely looking man of sorrows who would suffer more than any sinner would

1 Luke 1:26

2 Luke 1:30, insertion mine

3 Luke 1:31-35, insertions mine

have to suffer. God sent Jesus, who obediently came to give us all that belonged to Him. Jesus is not a superman; He is much more than that: He is an eternal God who took on the lowly form of a man to share His riches.

During John's exile on Patmos, he had a vision of heaven of events which I believe occurred in 1798.¹ The story began when John saw a scroll (book) in the Father's right hand sealed with seven seals. A mighty angel called out, "**Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?**"² Unfortunately, no one in heaven or on the earth was qualified. When John learned that no one was worthy to break the seals and open the book, he "wept and wept." He was brokenhearted because he understood the profound importance of the contents.

We cannot examine everything that made John weep, but a few words about the role and importance of the book might be helpful. The Father wrote a book before creation and sealed it with seven seals so that no created being could know what He had written. When no one was found worthy to break the seals and expose the contents, John wept because he understood there was no way to exonerate the Father from Lucifer's lies and scurrilous charges. Long before Jesus created Earth, Lucifer led a rebellion

¹ See Chapter 5 in my book, *The Lamb's Book of Life*.

² Revelation 5:2

against the Father by twisting many facts and using unanswerable questions. His lies were so clever and sophisticated that one-third of the holy angels joined the rebellion and were cast out of heaven. When the scene in Revelation 5 occurred, John realized the angels in heaven had waited thousands of years to have Lucifer's charges addressed. However, when the time came to exonerate the Father, no one was found worthy to receive the book, break the seals, and reveal what the Father had written.

John does not record what was needed to break the seals in Revelation 5, but the angels summarized the criteria in a new song as they sang: **“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.”**¹ John also reported that after Jesus received the book, the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures bowed down and worshiped Him. Their response indicates unanimous approval and the recognition that Jesus is deity.

John, Paul, and Daniel Prophecy the Same Event

About thirty-five years after Jesus ascended to heaven, Paul made the following prediction: **“And he [the Father] made known to us the mystery of**

¹ Revelation 5:9

his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reached their fulfillment – to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.”¹

Daniel saw the same event about 600 years earlier: **“In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”²** This verse pinpoints two facts. First, the Father gave Jesus sovereign power. Second, the Father relinquished his authority when he gave Jesus sovereign power.

Synthesizing the statements from John, Paul, and Daniel, I believe the Father recused himself from the throne in 1798. This would allow Jesus to rule the universe independently and bring the sin problem to a close. When we consider the risks of transferring control of the universe to another, we understand why it was essential to find someone worthy to receive the sealed book. The Father wants all beings to witness that Jesus is capable of ruling the universe.

¹ Ephesians 1:9–10, insertion mine

² Daniel 7:13–14

The shifting of roles is part of a process that began in 1798, which I call *the revelation of Jesus Christ*.

The Father placed His character, governance, and exoneration in Jesus' worthy hands when Jesus received the book. While John does not explain it, Paul wrote that Jesus' sovereign authority is temporary. **“Then the end will come, when he [Jesus, at the end of the 1,000 years] hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he [Jesus] has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he [Jesus] must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he [the Father] ‘has put everything under his [Jesus’] feet.’ Now when it says that ‘everything’ has been put under him [Jesus], it is clear that this does not include God [the Father] himself, who put everything under Christ. When he [Jesus] has done this [destroyed the curse of sin and death itself], then the Son himself will be made subject to him [the Father] who put everything under him, so that God [the Father] may be [above and over] all in all.”**¹

Christian Monotheism

If the prevailing view of Christian monotheism is accurate, one God manifesting himself in three persons, Jesus' new role in Revelation 5 makes no

¹ 1 Corinthians 15:24–28, insertions mine

sense. What difference does it make if Jesus was found worthy to receive the book if the God who wrote it was the same God found worthy to open it? What would be the point of God searching the universe to find someone worthy to receive the book with seven seals only to discover that no one, other than himself, is worthy? The only way to eliminate internal conflict in Revelation 5 is if two distinct Gods, each having His own will, are involved. If this is the case, transferring sovereign power and the book sealed with seven seals to Jesus makes perfect sense. Moreover, Paul refers to two Gods by writing that Jesus will transfer this sovereign power back to the Father at the end of sin's drama. Jesus will be subject to the Father once again.

Revelation 5 quashes the idea that Jesus is a created being. The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures worshiped Him. No created being is to be worshiped.¹ Daniel 7 crushes a once *sufficient doctrine* that the Trinity is one God manifesting himself in three persons. Instead, there are separate and distinct Gods temporarily transferring sovereign power between them.

Controversy over the Trinity

Christians have argued endlessly about the Godhead and the nature of the Trinity since Jesus ascended to

¹ Revelation 19:10

heaven. The reason for the controversy is ignorance. Until unfettered light shines, shadows are misleading. God has sealed the book of Daniel until the end of time.¹ The book of Revelation has much to say about Jesus that previous generations could not have known or anticipated.

Given what I have learned about Jesus and the Godhead, the following explanation is consistent with my understanding. When the Trinity formed, three equal, coeternal, distinct, and separate Gods met to discuss the future. They decided to unite and function as one God to benefit the universe. If three separate, distinct, coeternal Gods ruled the universe, created beings would get confused and end up taking sides resulting in needless conflict and competition. So, three Gods decided to function as one God, but their decision required each to give up two-thirds of their rights and prerogatives so that $1/3 + 1/3 + 1/3 = 1$.

The Trinity decided that one God, the God we now call *Jesus*, would become the Creator of everything. To accomplish this, the Gods we call *the Father*, and *the Holy Spirit* gave up their right to create so that only Jesus would serve as Creator. The Gods we call *Jesus*, and *the Father* agreed to give up the power of omnipresence so that only the Holy Spirit could be everywhere at once. The Gods we call *the Holy Spirit*

¹ Daniel 12:4, 9

and *Jesus* gave up their right to sit on the throne so the God we call *the Father* could rule as *Most High God*. Knowing that marriage is a 50/50 arrangement, consider the enormous love and surrender involved when each member of the Trinity forfeited two-thirds of His divine power and prerogatives to the other two.

The surrender of their rights and prerogatives to each other explains why the Holy Spirit and Jesus do not know the future. Only the Father has foreknowledge, and this exclusive power enabled Him to write a complete history of humanity before Jesus created heaven and Earth. Jesus and the Holy Spirit do not know what the Father wrote in the Book of Life. When the Father wrote the Book of Life, He included the life record of every angel that would live in heaven and every person that would live on Earth. The information in His book is extremely sensitive because the Father foreknew who would and who would not be saved. So, He sealed the book with seven seals so that no one could learn what He foreknew until the drama with sin is completed. The Book of Life is not used to judge human beings. It is only opened at the end of the 1,000 years when the seventh seal is broken.¹ If anyone (angel or human) discovers what the Father wrote before sin's drama is completed, the Father would never escape the charge that He predetermined who would be saved

¹ Revelation 20:12

or lost. When the contents of this book are presented to the universe, the Father will prove that He foreknew Lucifer's rebellion and Adam and Eve's fall. He also foreknew the price Jesus would pay to save sinners. He foreknew who would choose to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit and receive salvation and who would not. Most of all, He will prove that although He perfectly knows the future, He does not control our choices. He permitted Lucifer and his followers to sin, He permitted Adam and Eve to sin, and He allows us to rebel against Him. God's children will have free will and the power of choice for eternity.

Jesus Found Worthy to Receive the Book

Once we correctly understand the purpose of the Book of Life and its seven seals, we will appreciate the scene in Revelation 5. Like John, we can now understand the call, **“Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?”** Three qualifications made Jesus uniquely worthy to receive the scroll and the sovereign power that went with it:

First, Jesus was willing for the Father to send Him to Earth, and He perfectly fulfilled the Father's will, even to the point of dying without any hope of resurrection. No greater example of perfect love and submission to the Father's will has ever been demon-

strated, and no greater love for sinners has ever been seen.

Second, Jesus stooped to the lowly position of becoming a man. He faced every temptation known to man. He faced even greater temptations to use divine power for personal advantage, yet He never sinned. After the Jews condemned Jesus to death for blasphemy and the Roman soldiers nearly beat Him to death, Jesus could have exercised divine authority and ended the process of saving sinners. This was a huge temptation, but Jesus chose to *press on* and die for sinners, including those abusing Him. No one, other than Jesus, has ever faced such an overwhelming temptation.

Finally, while on the cross, the Father shocked Jesus. He placed the curse of sin on Jesus, and this separated them.¹ The Father did this because He wanted to test Jesus. He wanted to demonstrate that Jesus loved sinners enough to die without any hope of living again. If Jesus voluntarily gave up His life without any hope of resurrection, the Father could legitimately transfer Jesus' life to sinners as a gift. When Jesus became separated from the Father, He was crushed! He cried out, "**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**" This was His ultimate test, and Jesus refused to exercise divine

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:21

power to save himself from eternal death. Instead, He put complete confidence and faith in the Father, saying, **“Into your hands I commit my spirit.”** Ironically, after finding that Jesus was worthy, the Father placed complete confidence and faith in Jesus when He gave Him sovereign power and the sealed book.

Given the nature and extraordinary accomplishments of Jesus as the perfect reflection of the Father, no one but Jesus reveals the love that the Father has for sinners. No one was more worthy to receive the book with seven seals and receive the Father’s throne with sovereign power. No one can claim nepotism, given the qualifications required to break the seals! Jesus was found worthy because of His faith and love for the Father and sinners. The four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, and billions of angels rejoiced with praise and worship when He received the sealed book. The Father stepped aside, Jesus ascended the throne, and His first action was to break the first seal.

God’s love is a selfless principle that maintains a perfect balance between righteousness and justice, mercy and forgiveness. Decisions based on love can be agonizingly difficult. Some situations require infinite wisdom, patience, and persistence. The Bible is the best source explaining

love. **“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”**¹ The Father designed the plan of salvation before Creation. He foreknew the rise of sin and created a plan with such a high price for salvation that no one could ever challenge the idea that saving undefiant sinners was unjust. Moreover, when the drama with sin is finally completed, no one can question the law that requires a future sinner to be executed on the day he sins.²

Using His infinite wisdom, the Father took what belonged to Jesus and transferred it to those who would live by faith. Simultaneously, the Father transferred to Jesus everything that the curse of sin produces. The Father chose to send Jesus to Earth, knowing He would be scourged to near death before dying hopelessly on the cross. Through the Father’s infinite love, He chose to crush the life of Jesus out of His heart. Which would be more painful for a loving parent: Dying so that his child could live or putting the child to death? Can you imagine the agony? Many parents have said they would gladly give up their lives if it meant their

1 John 3:16–17

2 Genesis 2:17

deceased child could live. No earthly love matches the depth of parental love.

Brotherly love is also fervent. Jesus said to His disciples, **“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”**¹ There is a higher love than parental and brotherly love. The Father and the Son demonstrated divine love through their incredible mission and sacrifice to save sinners. Jesus willingly gave His life for His enemies,² and the Father put His only Son to death. Deity, not humanity, took Jesus’ life at Calvary.

The plan of salvation serves several objectives. The Father has revealed the depth of His love for His children by giving us, Jesus. He killed another member of the Godhead to save us. He sent Jesus to live as one of us to show the love that exists between the Father and Son. The Father also chose to use the Plan of Salvation to reveal that the ever-humble Jesus is an almighty God just like himself! Therefore, when the Father designed the plan of salvation, He deliberately took steps that made His own suffering unfathomable and the sufferings of Jesus unbearable. When we understand that the Father loves Jesus with all His heart, mind, and soul, giving us “His only Son” goes beyond comprehension.

1 John 15:13

2 Romans 5:10

God designed the Plan of Salvation to make Jesus an eternal ideal. The Father lives in unapproachable light and will reign as almighty God throughout eternity. Still, He wants it known that Jesus is His equal even though Jesus lives in the humble form of a created being. Throughout eternity, Jesus will receive honor and worship wherever He goes. This adulation will not overshadow the honor and worship for the Father because He is humble and selfless as Jesus. The Father is pleased when Jesus receives worship, honor, and praise.

The humility demonstrated by Jesus, who created the universe, when washing the dirty feet of the disciples in the upper room is the same humility the Father demonstrated toward Jesus. The hearts of the Father and Jesus are filled with love for each other and their neighbors. Their differences are in their roles, not in their deity. This is why the Father decreed before heaven and Earth were created that all created beings must honor and worship the Creator as they honor and worship the Father. Lucifer and his followers chose to rebel against this law. Revelation 14:6 described this decree as *the eternal gospel*.

God is Love

One of the best arguments favoring the existence of three separate, equal, distinct, coeternal Gods is the

biblical declaration: **“God is love.”**¹ This declaration is far more profound than many people realize.

The Godhead always lives and acts within the boundaries of love. The Trinity perfectly demonstrates what love is and what love does. The Bible has revealed the words, thoughts, and actions of the Godhead over about seven thousand years. This is long enough for every possible situation to arise so God’s character can be scrutinized. It also provides time for the curse of sin to mature so that everyone can see the results of sin. God has miraculously preserved the Bible through the ages because it correctly reveals His ways, plans, character, and love. God wants everyone to know Him and His ways by studying His Word. He wants sinners to understand the principle of love because the two highest laws in the universe are laws of love. One day, a lawyer asked Jesus: **“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”** Jesus replied: **‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.’**²

Love should not be confused with feelings or emotions. Love is not indulgence, lust, insatiable desire, or addiction. Love is doing right by someone even

1 1 John 4:8

2 Matthew 22:36–39

when we might not want to. Love has firm boundaries and includes discipline. It is humble and fair. Love exalts righteousness and always honors integrity and truth. God's love grants everyone the power of choice—the freedom to be self-directed.

The boundaries of love are called laws. Sin occurs when a boundary is violated. For example, it is a sin to commit murder, steal, commit adultery, lie, and covet. Love does not harm others because love originates from selflessness. On the other hand, selfishness causes harm and offense. Selfishness destroys relationships with abusive words and actions. Hatred, murder, lying, cheating, stealing, sexual immorality, greed, and dishonesty are the fruits of selfishness. Lust—I want, is the opposite of love—I give.

Love is directly connected to the doctrine of the Trinity. If there is only one God, and He is a self-proclaimed God of love, the first law of love is a contradiction in terms. How can a person love the Lord with all his heart, mind, and soul when this behavior is demanded? If God demands love, how is He different from Hitler, Stalin, and other dictators? Dictators, kings, queens, and warlords operate on the premise that any attempt to depose, dethrone, or restrict their sovereign power is treason, and all traitors deserve death because traitors want to tear

down the power of THE authority. Therefore, if we wrongly attempt to apply the first law of love within the context of monotheism, we have a situation where God demands love. Lucifer used this logic to taunt the angels loyal to the Father, saying, “Go ahead, break the first law of love, and the penalty for sin (sudden death) will be yours.” The Christian version of monotheism—one God manifesting himself in three persons—does not change the first law of love because there is still one God demanding love. This demand would be contrary to the nature of love because love is what a freewill person must choose to give. Love can only be given and cannot be coerced, demanded, or extracted. If God commands everyone to acclaim Him as first and foremost because He has the highest throne, He is a dictator.

A Covenant of Love

Previously, we considered how three Gods eternally gave up a portion of their rights and prerogatives to the other two. Their union would eliminate any competition between them and keep highly intelligent beings from developing loyalty to one particular God. Three Gods functioning in purpose, plan, and action is why the Bible declares God is love instead of Gods are love.

They base their commitment to one another on two laws of love. The first law stipulates that each God would love the other two with His heart, mind, and soul. The second covenant stipulates that each God would love *their* children as they love themselves. In this agreement, The Holy Spirit would see and hear everything occurring in the universe and instantaneously report His observations to the other Gods. The Holy Spirit would also serve as a divine conduit through whom the Father and Jesus could communicate with their children. The attributes of the Godhead (love, joy, peace, happiness, purpose, and the fullness of life) are conveyed to angels and humans through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Father would sit on the throne as Most High God in charge of the universe. He alone would have the powers of foreknowledge and infinite wisdom. Jesus would speak for all three Gods. He would be called the *Word* and serve as the Creator. He would create each being that the Father wanted to experience life. When the time came, and the Father wanted to save Adam and Eve, Jesus learned the Father had chosen Him to be their Redeemer.

If you can accept the idea that it takes three Gods to function as one God, guess what? The Trinity becomes a daily demonstration of what love is. Each God loves and worships the other two with all of His heart, mind, and soul, and all three love their neigh-

bors as themselves. This means that each of the three Gods would have died to save sinners; this shows why the two highest laws in the universe are laws of love. The three Gods live together in perfect peace and harmony, and this is only possible through humble submission to one another. No union in the universe is stronger and more fulfilling than that experienced by the Trinity. They want their daily experience to be the everyday experience of their children. This is why they created the angels and Adam and Eve in their image, after their likeness. Jesus gave Adam and Eve a selfless nature and a powerful propensity for righteousness. They lived in an environment where love excelled until they sinned. If we understand that the Trinity consists of three Gods serving the universe as one God, the first law of love is no longer a self-seeking law. Instead, it represents a living covenant between the Trinity, and we must abide by the same covenant to enter their relationship of love. Incidentally, the Ten Commandments are called a covenant¹ and are stored in the Ark of the Covenant.² The first four commandments define love for God, and the remaining six commandments define love for others. God has promised to write these laws in the hearts and minds of non-defiant sinners³ so that we can live within them, and they can live within us.

1 Exodus 34:28

2 Revelation 11:19

3 Hebrew 8:10

I understand the phrase, *God is love*, describes how the Trinity functions. Love is the only way that three omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and coeternal Gods can submit to each other and serve the universe as one God. Love is the only way that God's children can live in harmony with them and one another. Each God is selfless, and His humble submission (worship) to the other two makes the Trinity possible. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have made a covenant with each other to live in perfect harmony for eternity. They express their infinite love by inviting us to enter their joy. This is why Jesus commanded His followers to be baptized **“in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!”**¹ If we are willing to become a part of their infinite love, eternal life will be joy-full.

You may have noticed that this study on the Trinity has been more about resolving specific concepts presented in Scripture than merely offering a collection of proof texts. These concepts are encompassing and require more than a single God in the Godhead. Consider this axiom: “Truth is proven true by the harmony that comes from the sum of its parts.” This means that what may be considered truth within six proof texts may not be true when four other proof texts are added. Therefore, to resolve many apparent conflicts, this study on the Trinity includes several topics not

1 Matthew 28:19

normally associated with a study of the Godhead. To complete this series, let's examine the Holy Spirit. Is He an equal, separate, distinct, coeternal member of the Godhead? Or is He an influence that exists between the Father and Jesus? Consider seven attributes of the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit Has a Will and Speaks, Hears, Thinks, and Brings Glory to Jesus.

Shortly before His death, Jesus told His disciples, **“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.”**¹ Clearly, Jesus described an intelligent being, a third party who can think, hear, speak on His own, and independently carry out a mission of bringing glory to Jesus. Consider this analysis:

A. **“He will not speak on His own.”** This statement indicates that the Holy Spirit has a will. The phrase “He will not” implies that the Holy Spirit can speak. However, when the members of the Godhead formed, each God surrendered elements of His divinity to the other two. They agreed that the role of the

¹ John 16:13–14

Holy Spirit would be to serve as a faithful conduit between the Godhead and the universe. The God we now call the Holy Spirit gave up 2/3 of His rights and prerogatives to glorify the other two Gods.

- B. **“He will speak only what he hears.”** This phrase means the Holy Spirit is the revealer of God’s will and truth, but the Holy Spirit only reveals what the Father and Jesus allow. He stays in sync with the Father and Jesus at all times.
- C. **“He will glorify me [Jesus].”** The Holy Spirit has intelligence and reasoning powers like the Father and Jesus. The Holy Spirit loves and exalts Jesus the same way the Father loves and exalts Jesus.¹ Each selfless member of the Godhead exalts the other two above himself. The Holy Spirit delights in bringing glory to Jesus as the Father was delighted to give Jesus His throne in 1798.
- D. **“He will guide you into all truth.”** This authority, which belongs to the Holy Spirit, shows He has a work that the Father and Jesus cannot do. The Holy Spirit guides the children of God into all truth as the Father or Jesus advances truth. The Holy Spirit is our critical link with

¹ John 13:31–32; 17:1

the Godhead; through Him, we advance our understanding of truth. Earlier, we learned that Jesus spoke the Father's testimony through Jesus' lips. The Father wanted the Jews to know that Jesus was His equal. During the past 2,000 years, the Holy Spirit has given us a greater understanding of truth. He will convey the testimony of Jesus through the 144,000. The Holy Spirit does this so that God's children might know what is yet to come. Given the specifications in John 16:13–14, Jesus indicated the Holy Spirit is a hearing, thinking, speaking member of deity who has His own will. The Holy Spirit is not an influence between the Father and Jesus, as some suggest.

2. The Holy Spirit Has a Distinct Role and Purpose

The second verse in the Bible specifically mentions the Holy Spirit: “**Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.**”¹ The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters before Creation waiting to connect the forthcoming children of God to the Father and Jesus.

The Holy Spirit serves the whole universe as

¹ Genesis 1:2

a two-way conduit. The Father and Jesus send their righteousness, joy, peace, grace, and power to us through the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:22–23 called this transfer the fruits of the Spirit. We send our prayers, thoughts, fears, feelings, concerns, and praise through the Holy Spirit to the Father and Jesus. This transfer is 100% efficient; nothing is lost. Paul wrote, **“The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.”**¹ Because the Holy Spirit is also a God, the Father and Jesus understand the mind of the Spirit perfectly. When we need comfort, they know it and send comfort to us through the indwelling Spirit. When we need faith, the Holy Spirit immediately informs the Father and Jesus, and we are blessed with it.² The Holy Spirit intimately knows us, our hearts, and our motives. He never tires of interceding on our behalf. This is not the work of an influence that exists between two Gods. It is the work of an infinitely intelligent and divinely capable member of deity.

¹ Romans 8:26–27

² John 12:49; Mark 13:11

3. The Holy Spirit Did Everything Possible to Bring the Antediluvians to Repentance

Jesus spoke to Noah before the flood saying, **“My Spirit will not contend with humans forever, for they are mortal; their days will be a hundred and twenty years.”**¹ After the 120 years expired, the flood came and washed them all away. The flood was necessary because the antediluvians had blasphemed the Holy Spirit. They shut out His inner voice by choosing the ways of wickedness instead of righteousness. They became engrossed and numbed by sin. When Jesus saw that He could do nothing further with such hateful and violent people, He destroyed them. There is a simple explanation for the increase of wickedness: **“The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, but consider them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.”**² If the Holy Spirit is grieved away by defiance, a God of love is forced to accept it because He will not violate a person’s free will.

4. Ananias and Sapphira Lied to the Holy Spirit

Because the Holy Spirit is the *all-seeing* member of deity, He recognizes a lie when He hears it. In

¹ Genesis 6:3

² 1 Corinthians 2:14

Acts 5:5, 10, He killed Ananias and Sapphira for lying to Him! **“Then Peter said, ‘Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God.’”**¹ Because the Holy Spirit is a member of deity, He can give life and He can take life. In fact, the Holy Spirit resurrected Jesus and gave Him life! **“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.”**²

The Holy Spirit is often mentioned in the Bible in the possessive case; that is, the Holy Spirit appears to belong to someone. Jesus said in Genesis 6:3 (NKJV), **“My Spirit will not strive with man forever.”** Paul wrote in Romans 8:11, **“The Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead.”** The simple reason is that the Holy Spirit serves the Father and Jesus. They tell the Spirit what to do and He hears, intelligently responds, and implements

1 Acts 5:3-4

2 Romans 8:11

their wishes. The Holy Spirit is submissive to their commands, and this explains why possessive language is used.

5. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit Is the Unpardonable Sin

Jesus said: **“And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”**¹ The Holy Spirit is the only member of the Godhead that is omnipresent. This is why Jesus told His disciples, **“But very truly I tell you, It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate [actually, Counselor] will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.”**² Even though the Spirit is unseen, He is everywhere, seeing everything at the same instant. David wrote, **“Where can I go [to hide] from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.”**³

1 Matthew 12:31–32

2 John 16:7, insertion mine

3 Psalm 139:7–8

The Holy Spirit is the only member of deity that can live within each child of God at the same instant. The Father and Jesus are physically limited, but the Spirit is everywhere. The Father and Jesus know everything occurring because the Holy Spirit constantly informs the Father and Jesus. The Holy Spirit is our only connection with the Father and Jesus. If we defy the Spirit and shut Him out of our lives, we cannot connect with God, and God cannot connect with us. If we continue to violate the efforts of the Holy Spirit by doing evil, He will leave us because He is not permitted to override a defiant will. Those who commit the unpardonable sin are not drawn to God, have no interest in serving God, and have no desire to repent of their sins or glorify God. This is why rejecting the Holy Spirit is eternally fatal.

6. The Holy Spirit Is a Member of the Trinity

The Holy Spirit is invisible (like the Father), but this does not reduce His importance or position within the Trinity. Remember, it takes three Gods to function as One unit. Each God performs functions the other two cannot do. This explains why Jesus commanded, **“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy**

Spirit.”¹ The three are equal, separate, distinct, coeternal Gods who are eternally united in love. Man’s highest privilege is to join their relationship for eternity.

7. The Holy Spirit Will Soon Separate the Sheep from the Goats

The Bible points forward to a time when the whole world will experience a great display of Holy Spirit power. The prophet Joel gives us an Old Testament parallel of this phenomenon: **“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”**² This coming manifestation of the Holy Spirit is necessary because before Jesus returns, the sheep and the goats must be separated. Jesus described the difference between the sheep and goats by saying, **“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”**³ Paul wrote, **“For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.”**⁴ Currently, eight billion people are living on Earth, and those whom the Holy Spirit leads

1 Matthew 28:19

2 Joel 2:28–29

3 John 10:27

4 Romans 8:14

are children of God. They listen to Jesus' voice even though many of His sheep currently do not know that they are following Jesus. During the Great Tribulation, the 144,000 will proclaim Jesus' testimony, and the sheep will discover that they have been following Jesus all along. These people will worship the Creator and observe His Sabbath because they know the voice of the Holy Spirit. The interesting outcome of this process is that the Holy Spirit will decisively separate the goats from the sheep.

The best way to determine the identity of the Holy Spirit is to open your Bible and study the topic of the Trinity. Allow the Spirit to show you from Scripture the nature of the Godhead. If you consider the topics presented in this series and are willing to let the Holy Spirit guide you into all truth, you have nothing to fear.

Concluding Details About Tritheism

1. Jewish Monotheism — One God.

We learned that Jewish monotheism teaches there is one God (Jehovah), and all other gods are false or imaginary. The Father sent Jesus to Earth so the Father could speak through Jesus. The Father wanted to confront the Jews with the fact that they did not know Him. Jesus was crucified for

blasphemy, speaking the exact words the Father gave Him to speak. The Father confirmed that Jesus was His Son (His equal) on four occasions. a) At Jesus' baptism. b) On the mount of transfiguration. c) In the temple, shortly before Jesus was crucified. d) By tearing the temple veil from top to bottom. In addition to these manifestations, the Father worked many miracles through Jesus.

2. Truth is Always Unfolding

The Father releases knowledge over time. Therefore, truth is constantly unfolding. New light can either supplement or abolish doctrines once thought to be absolute truth. The Father attempted to terminate the Jewish doctrine of monotheism through Jesus, but the Jews would not accept it; neither would they accept the truth about Him. The Father validated the deity of Jesus with many miracles, even His virgin birth. However, the miracles only hardened the hearts of the Jews. When the mind is unwilling to let go of idolatry and tradition, miracles do not matter. When the Father speaks, He either speaks through Jesus, to Jesus, or He exalts Jesus. He does not otherwise speak. The Father is invisible. No one has ever seen Him except Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The Father lives in unapproachable light.

3. God Reveals His Mysteries Over Time

Jesus is called *the Word* because the Father's testimony comes through Jesus. The Father follows a predictable process. On or about the time of a prophetic fulfillment, the Father reveals His plans to people searching for truth. After Paul opened his mind to the deity of Jesus, he understood that God reveals mysteries over time, and what he once thought was absolute truth had to be unlearned because of new light. Jesus is the Creator of everything that exists. Everything He makes belongs to the Father, except those whom Jesus redeems. Jesus spoke to Israel in Old Testament times within the context of monotheism because He was the only God they knew. Therefore, Jesus used a singular personal pronoun in many statements, such as, **"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."**¹

4. The Death of Deity was Required to Transfer Sin

Because Jesus is a member of deity and He died on the cross, we know that the price to save sinners required the death of deity. The Father required a donor with powers within himself to legitimately transfer the righteousness and eternal life to sinners. The Plan of Salvation is built on the premise that guilt and righteousness are transferable. Jesus had to overcome every possible temptation before

¹ Exodus 20:3, KJV

the Father would accept His sacrifice. Because Jesus overcame the world, the guilt of sinners can be legitimately transferred to Jesus, and His righteousness can be transferred to sinners. Advocates for a created Jesus or a perfect human substitute infinitely devalue the price Jesus actually paid for our salvation.

5. Jesus Could Not Use Divine Power for Personal Advantage

The Father did not create Jesus. Jesus became a subject (Son) of the Father when He voluntarily accepted the Father's plan to save sinners. Jesus did not come to Earth on His own. The Father sent Jesus. Jesus is called the Son to indicate that the Father could not pay a higher price for sinners. There could be no greater anguish on the Father's part than requiring Jesus to suffer all that was necessary for the salvation of sinners. Before Jesus could die for sinners, He had to be tempted as sinners are tempted. In addition, He had to reject the severe temptation of using divine power for safety or personal advantage. While Jesus was on the cross, the Father shocked Jesus. He caused Jesus to be crushed when the curse of sin was applied. Jesus cried out, **"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"** The Father removed from

Jesus any hope of resurrection to prove that Jesus loved sinners enough to donate His eternal life to them and cease to exist forever and that Jesus would not doubt the Father's promise to resurrect Him or use His own divine power to prevent His death.

6. Monotheism or One God as Three Persons Cause Internal Conflict

The Jewish and Christian doctrine of monotheism, one God manifesting himself in three different persons, puts the Bible in a state of internal conflict. This is evident in Revelation 5.

It makes no sense for the Father to write a book, seal it with seven seals, and conduct a search throughout the universe for someone worthy to receive the book, only to find Himself worthy to receive His own book. Jesus was found worthy to receive the book sealed with seven seals because He: Came to Earth and overcame every temptation; lived a life that was in perfect compliance with the Father's will; was willing to die for sinners even when there was no hope of resurrection. He could have used divine authority at any time to end the cruel treatment that He suffered. He could have come down off the cross if He wanted, but He chose to die without any

hope of living again so He could give sinners His righteousness and eternal life. When the search was conducted, in the entire universe, only Jesus was found worthy to sit on the throne and receive sovereign power. Jesus was found worthy because He has shown the universe the depth of the Father's love for sinners. In 1798, the Father put everything in heaven and on Earth under Jesus so that He could complete the sin problem in a way that no deficiencies could be found throughout eternity.

7. The Trinity is Three Separate Gods Acting as One

If the Father's death for sinners would have achieved the best possible outcome, the Father would have certainly come to Earth and died for sinners. He has the same love for sinners Jesus has. If the Father had come to Earth and died for sinners, what response would He have a billion years from now if someone sinned? How could the Father implement His sudden death law and avoid the accusation of being unfair? How could the Father avoid the criticism; *He gave His life to save sinners long ago, so why not now?* The Father, according to infinite wisdom and sovereign authority, created a plan of salvation that would only need to be implemented once. This

plan includes many new revelations about the nature of God's love and government. It also contains hundreds of object lessons that will endure for all eternity. To function as one God, three Gods gave up 2/3 of themselves. Their selfless behavior each day will be an eternal example of what love is and how it functions. The commandment *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, and soul* can only be fulfilled through selflessness, living with the Trinity as they live in the Trinity. Even though Jesus and the Holy Spirit direct us to worship the Father, the Father does not consider it blasphemy when/if we worship all three together because they are equals and they function as one God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have made a covenant of love with each other for all eternity. Their covenant guarantees that eternal life will be joyful and safe, free from the power of sin.

8. The Holy Spirit is the Conduit Between the Other Gods and His Creation

The Holy Spirit is a member of deity. He is an equal, distinct, separate, coeternal member of the Godhead. The work of the Holy Spirit is to be a two-way conduit from the Father and Jesus to all creation and from all creation. If it were not for

the ministry of the Holy Spirit, no one could know God, walk with God, or enjoy the love of God. If we continually insult, blaspheme, and defy the Holy Spirit, He will leave us because He will not violate our free will. Jesus commanded that His disciples be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit because they make up the Godhead.

Every believer has the privilege of becoming part of their joy and eternal goodness. The Trinity consists of three immortal and selfless Gods perfectly united in purpose, plan, and action. They function as one God to benefit their children, and their selfless surrender to each other defines what love is and is not. I believe this topic has been controversial for centuries because it was not time for the truth about the Trinity to be revealed. We must have a thorough knowledge of many subjects—beyond a few proof texts—to understand the Trinity correctly. I pray you will study the Bible with a greater appreciation for the phrase; *God is love*. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, three equal, distinct, separate, coeternal Gods, Amen.

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